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OPERATION OF THE COAST GUARD CUTTER HUDSON IN THE
SPANISH AMERICAN WAR.

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Saturday, April 2, 1898, left the Battery, New York, (Barge Office), at 2:00 p.m., for Norfolk Navy Yard. Sunday, April 3, 1898, arrived at Norfolk Navy Yard at 5:00 p.m. Found the Revenue Steamers MANNING, WOODBURY, WINDOM, HAMILTON and MORRILL there.

Saturday, April 23, 1898, left Norfolk Navy Yard about 1:00 p.m. for Key West. Anchored under Cape Henry that afternoon. Sunday, April 24th left Cape Henry for the South at 6:20 p.m. Monday, April 25th, about 10:00 p.m. anchored one mile south of Cape Lookout Light in four fathoms of water.

Tuesday, April 26th about 8:30 a.m. up anchor and resumed voyage. Ran into and passed through a ninety mile hurricane during the night. The seas were terrific, breaking against the house of the HUDSON with such violence that there was over one-half inch of salt on the engine cylinders the next morning, from the sea water squirting through the key holes in the engine room doors and from leaks around the doors.

A barrel of molasses and a keg of vinegar broke up in the fore hold during the storm, this mixture came aft through the bilges and washed over the fire room floor plates, making it almost impossible for the firemen to keep their feet. When the firemen came off watch they were a sorry sight, dripping with vinegar and molasses, coal dust and ashes.

Wednesday, April 27th passed in by Cape Fear sea buoy at 7:00 a.m. Arrived at Wilmington, N.C. at 10:30 a.m.

Thursday and Friday, April 28th and 29th, repairing. On account of the storm had to break out all store rooms and lockers, dry out all bedding and clothing and replace stores.

Saturday, April 30th, coaling. 1:50 p.m. steamed down the river. 4:40 p.m. out over the Bar. Sunday, May 1st. 5:20 p.m. anchored in Saint Andrews Sound for a harbor. Monday, May 2nd. 5:30 a.m. underway. 9:25 a.m. in over St. John's Bar. At noon arrived at Jacksonville, coaled ship.

Tuesday, May 3rd. 5:00 a.m. down the river. 7:45 a.m. out over the Bar. Passed Cape Canaveral after dark. Wednesday, May 4th at 4:25 p.m. anchored under Carysfort Reef Light, inside the Reef, for a harbor. Thursday, May 5th at 3:40 p.m. arrived at Key West.

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May 8th left Key West for Cuban blockade. May 9th anchored off Piedras Key, entrance to Cardenas Bay. Two gun boats steamed down to the mouth of the harbor and reconnoitered our position, then turned and steamed back toward the city of Cardenas. Cardenas lies a distance of about ten miles from the harbor mouth.

May 10th examined entrance to Cardenas Bay, found the entrance had been filled. Might have forced the HUDSON through but was afraid of mines. Found a second entrance through the keys which enclosed the northern side of Cardenas Bay. Reported the presence of the Spanish gun boats and the facts as to the entrances to Cardenas Bay to Commander Watson. The U.S.S. MACHIAS, WILMINGTON and Torpedo Boat WINSLOW were ordered to Piedras Key.

May 11th the MACHIAS shelled all the keys in the vicinity of the entrance to the Bay in order to drive out any of the enemy who might be guarding the entrance. The WILMINGTON, WINSLOW and HUDSON entered the Bay and steamed toward Cardenas. The WILMINGTON in the center and the WINSLOW and HUDSON covering the South and North shores to uncover the two Spanish gun boats. In reaching Cardenas the gun boats were discovered at their wharves. All three vessels started circling in front of the city and firing at the gun boats. The WINSLOW was ordered to go in and get them, she backed in and when a few hundred yards from the wharves the two gun boats and three field pieces opened up on her. The harbor is crescent shaped and all guns could be brought to bear on her. On being hit the WINSLOW steamed out and shortly afterward called on the HUDSON to haul her out as she was helpless. The wind was on shore and the WINSLOW being of light draft was drifting toward the enemies guns. The HUDSON drawing ten feet of water went to the WINSLOW'S rescue but was soon in soft mud and her progress was slow. (All during this time the HUDSON'S two six pounders were in use, they fired one hundred and twenty shells). When the HUDSON was about fifty feet from the WINSLOW a shell exploded killing Ensign Bagley and four men attached to the WINSLOW. A three inch line was put aboard the WINSLOW but it parted and the WINSLOW shot further in shore. The HUDSON was then worked through the mud to the WINSLOW and made fast fore and aft and the WINSLOW was towed out of range of fire. Lieutenant Bernadou of the WINSLOW had been wounded in the groin, he was taken on board the HUDSON and made as comfortable as possible. The WILMINGTON had started down the Bay but she was signalled to and stopped and a doctor taken on board the HUDSON to attend Lieutenant Bernadou.

Thursday, May 12th, 7:10 a.m. arrived at Key West with dead and wounded from WINSLOW. Friday, May 13th at 1:15 p.m. left Key West for Havana blockade. 10:00 p.m. stopped off Havana with dispatches for Commander Watson.

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Saturday, May 14th, 12:30 a.m. spoke U.S.S. MAYFLOWER, went on board and delivered dispatches to Commander McKenzie, senior officer present. 2:30 a.m. returned to HUDSON with the dispatches. Followed the MAYFLOWER until 6:10 a.m. when not finding Commander Watson present steamed along the coast to the Eastward to find him. 11:00 a.m. overhauled Steamer GUSSIE with Cuban expedition. MACHIAS and MANNING present between Matanzas and Cardenas. At 12:30 spoke U.S.S. DOLPHIN, flagship, Commander Watson, and delivered dispatches. At night cruised off Cruy del Padre Light, 10 miles off and on.

Sunday, May 15th, anchored under Piedras in company of U.S.S. LEYDEN. 11:40 a.m. started up channel with LEYDEN for supposed Torpedo boat. Fired twenty-five rounds of six pounder ammunition. The supposed torpedo boat proved to be a hulk, it drifted down the coast to the westward during the night. The next day the San Francisco fired into it with five inch shells, the hulk blew up throwing out railroad iron and other metal missiles. The hulk is supposed to have been cast adrift with the hope that some American vessel would ram it and be destroyed.

Monday, May 16th anchored under Piedras with LEYDEN. At night cruised off Cruy del Padre. Tuesday, May 17th, 1898, anchored under Piedras with LEYDEN. 5:30 p.m. U.S.S. ANNAPOLIS brought orders from Commander Watson to start for Matanzas after dark and at daylight show vessel close in front of city, so as to show that blockade was not abandoned. Took three and one-half tons of coal from LEYDEN, also received orders to keep special lookout for rockets from the westward. If we saw one to answer it with a rocket and make way to Key West as best we could. At 9:00 p.m. off Matanzas. 11:00 p.m. electric lights lighted in city. Maintained position off entrance, close in.

Wednesday, May 18, 1898, off Matanzas. 4:00 a.m. steamed slowly in. At daylight close in off city, between East and West batteries, close to range buoys. Reconnoitered position of large Spanish vessel that had run the blockade a few nights before with the idea of cutting her out if possible. Steamed within five or six hundred yards of her. It grew suddenly light and the HUDSON steamed out at full speed, thankful for not being shot at, as the guns of the fort could have certainly sunk the HUDSON if a close watch had been kept. 5:15 a.m. along the coast for Havana. At 10:00 a.m. passed WOODBURY and HAMILTON, East end of Havana blockade. 11:30 a.m. stopped and reported on board Flagship to Commodore Watson. 7:00 p.m. left for Key West with dispatches for Admiral Sampson. Wind fresh E.N.E., with heavy head on sea. Slowed down until midnight, when water suddenly smoothed..

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Thursday, May 19, 1898. 4:30 a.m. off Key West Bar. Went on board U.S.S. NEW YORK and delivered dispatches to Admiral Sampson. Saw Captain Chadwick, Chief of Staff, "S", asleep. At 6:00 a.m. steamed inside and reported to Commodore Nemy. Wednesday, May 25th, 1898. 6:50 p.m. went outside with pilot for U.S.S. OREGON. Reported at Jupiter that morning. Cruised off the bar.

Thursday, May 26th, at 2:30 a.m. saw a large vessel appearing to be the OREGON coming down from the Eastward. Ran for her and made night signals several times. Receiving no answer stemmed for her at full speed. Unable to catch her. At daylight made her out as the OREGON. Put up signal "We have Pilot for you". At 5:45 a.m. she stopped and we put pilot on board. Ran into Key West.

From May 27th to latter part of June carrying on night patrol off Key West. Then patrolled for thirty-one days off Matanzas and Cardenas. Returned to Key West. The HUDSON arrived in New York about the middle of August, 1898.

Most dates are correct but some are only approximate.

T. G. Lewton.

Addendum:

The crew of the HUDSON consisted of five officers and a crew of eighteen men.

The officers were as follows:

First Lieutenant Frank H. Newcomb
Second Lieutenant J. H. Scott
Third Lieutenant E. E. Mead.
First Assistant Engineer N. E. Cutchin
Second Assistant Engineer T. G. Lewton.

For the action of the HUDSON at Cardenas, Congress presented a gold medal to the Commanding Officer, silver medals to each of the four junior officers and bronze medals to all members of the crew.